

Psychological and Interpersonal Issues Postpartum

[insert presenter info]

Overview

- **Postpartum Psychological Issues**
 - Postpartum Blues
 - Postpartum Depression
 - Postpartum Psychosis
- **Psychological Benefits of Postpartum Exercise**
- **Miscellaneous Postpartum Psychological Factors**

Postpartum Psychological Issues

Postpartum Blues

- **Symptoms:**
 - **Sadness, anxiety, irritability**
 - **Uncontrollable tearfulness**
 - **Wide mood swings**
 - **Occasional negative thoughts**
- **Primary Treatment:**
 - **Supportive care and reassurance about the condition**

Postpartum Blues

- Often viewed as “normal”
- Affects 40 to 85% of new mothers
- Peaks between postpartum days 3 and 5
- Resolves within 24 to 72 hours
- Subsides without treatment by postpartum day 14

Postpartum Depression

Symptoms present most of the day, nearly everyday for more than 2 weeks postpartum

- Loss of interest in most things previously experienced as enjoyable.
- Subjective feeling of sadness

Postpartum Depression

- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions
- Psychomotor agitation or retardation
- Fatigue
- Changes in appetite and/or sleep patterns
- Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide

Postpartum Depression

- **Feelings of worthlessness or guilt (especially focusing on failure at motherhood)**
- **Excessive anxiety**
- **Frequently focusing on the child's health**

Postpartum Depression

- A more severe form of “postpartum blues”
- Affects 10 to 15% of new mothers
- Affects 26 to 32% of all adolescent new mothers
- Symptoms are more intense and longer lasting

Who is at risk?

- **Family History - especially a personal prior episode of depression**
- **Mother experiencing poor marital relationship/abusive relationship**
- **Lack of social support and/or child care stressors**
- **Comorbidities of substance abuse, anxiety or somatization disorders**

Postpartum Depression Interventions

- Psycho-therapy
 - Chronic psychosocial problems
 - Concurrent personality problems
 - Incomplete response to meds
- Medication
 - For more severe or chronic symptoms
 - Prior episodes or family histories with good response to meds
 - Less costly and less time consuming
- Combination Therapy

Clinical Depression

- 15 to 25% of the overall population
- < 25% under the care of a mental health specialist
- Twice as common in women
- Peak incidence during primary reproductive years (25 to 45 yrs)

Postpartum Psychosis

- Rare condition, affecting 1 to 2 out of 1000 women after childbirth
- Presentation can be dramatic
- Onset as early as 48 to 72 hours postpartum
- Symptoms develop within the first 2 weeks after delivery

Postpartum Psychosis

- Early Symptoms
 - Restlessness
 - Irritability
 - Sleep disturbance
- Progressive Symptoms
 - Depressed or elated mood
 - Disorganized behavior
 - Mood swings/instability
 - Delusions
 - Hallucinations



Your healthcare provider will initiate an immediate referral for postpartum psychological problems for thoughts of suicide or homicide

- Severely impaired functioning
- Comorbid substance abuse
- Behavior that indicates possible harm to the child or children
- Presence of psychotic symptoms
- Failure to respond to anti-depressant treatment trial

Self-Referral

- **If you are concerned that you may be experiencing postpartum depression, you are not alone.**
- **You may always make a self-referral to the behavioral health activity at your installation.**

Miscellaneous Postpartum Psychological

Bonding With Your Baby

- **Touch is an essential part of bonding even when there are complications**



Prevention

- **Talk to your provider prior to pregnancy or during your pregnancy if you or a family member has a history of post-partum depression or depression.**
- **Create a plan for support once the baby arrives.**

Taking Care of Your Baby

- Expect sleep deprivation
- Postpartum blues is common and occurs 3-5 days after birth
- Most women find that they are isolated during the first 2-3 months after birth
- The PPPT program is a great way to socialize with other postpartum mothers.

Psychological & Interpersonal Benefits of Exercise for Postpartum Mothers

- Increases energy level

- Eases tension and stress
- Provides an opportunity to meet other expectant and postpartum mothers



A Word on Complicated Pregnancies

- Medical complications during pregnancy can have an impact on postpartum psychological functioning
 - May increase the likelihood of blues or depression
 - May increase the length of postpartum symptoms
- In most cases, even complicated pregnancies are not associated with formal psychiatric illnesses or conditions.

Local Resources

Contact any of the following for assistance:

- Primary care provider
- Behavioral health professional
- Army Family Support Group
- Chaplain
- ACS
- Unit Leaders
- Personal Family Support Chain

Information Resources

- **Army Behavioral Health**
www.behavioralhealth.army.mil
- **USACHPPM Health Promotion and Wellness,**
<http://chppm-www.apgea.army.mil/dhpw/Readiness/suicide.aspx>
- **Army G-1 Human Resources,**
<http://www.armyg1.army.mil/hr/default.asp>
- **Military One Source**
www.militaryonesource.com
select Area of Interest 'Depression'
Info Hotline: 1-800-342-9647

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